

My Voice My Well-Being: A Participatory Research Study with Secondary School Students in Bangladesh

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Abstract : Well-being commonly refers to the concept that equates to a good life. Similarly, student well-being can be understood as a notion of a good life at school. What constitutes a good life at school for students? - is an emerging question that poses huge interest in this area of research. Student well-being is not only associated with a student's socio-emotional and academic development at school but also success in life after school as an adult. Today, student well-being is a popular agenda for educators, policymakers, teachers, parents, and most importantly, for students. With the emergence of student well-being, student's voice in matters important to them at school is increasingly getting priority. However, the coin has another side too. Despite the growing importance of understanding student well-being, it is still an alien concept in countries like Bangladesh. The education system of Bangladesh is highly rigid, centralized, and exam-focused. Student's academic achievement has been given the utmost priority at school, whereas their voice, as well as their well-being, is grossly neglected in practice. In this regard, the study set out to explore students' conceptualization of well-being at school in Bangladesh. The study was qualitative. It employed a participatory research approach to elicit the views of 25 secondary school students of aged 14-16 in Bangladesh to explore the concept of well-being. Data analysis was conducted following the thematic analysis technique. The results suggested that student conceptualized well-being as a multidimensional concept with multiple domains, including having, being, relating, feeling, thinking, functioning, and striving. The future implication of the study findings is discussed. Additionally, the study also underscores the implication of the participatory approach as a research technique to explore students' opinion in Bangladesh, where there exists a culture of silence regarding the student's voice.

Keywords : Bangladesh, participatory research, secondary school, student well-being

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